

**Annex A – Extracts of briefings, submissions etc sent to the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport and/or the Minister for Transport from 16 February 2021 to 11 October 2022 in relation to timeline, funding, construction and delivery of the A96 Inverness to Nairn (Including Nairn Bypass) scheme.**

## **Extract from briefing sent to the Minister for Transport dated 18 February 2021**

1. Design work is well underway on the dualling programme. The Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme is the most advanced section in the programme and currently going through the statutory process. We are also making good progress on the section between Hardmuir and Fochabers with the development and assessment of the preferred option well underway. Route option assessment work on the section between East of Huntly and Aberdeen is also now complete and the preferred option was announced at a virtual exhibition on 21 December 2020.
2. The A96 Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme comprises approximately 31 kilometres of new dual carriageway which starts approximately 850 metres east of Inverness and the Raigmore Interchange and continues in a north-easterly direction to Hardmuir, 3.5 kilometres east of Auldearn where it connects with the existing A96 single carriageway. Access to the proposed scheme will be provided by six new grade-separated junctions which do not disrupt the flow of traffic on the main dual-carriageway.
3. The proposed Scheme will also provide significant benefits for Non-Motorised Users ("NMUs"). It includes approximately 30 kilometres of new shared-use path with various links and accesses being provided to facilitate movement of NMUs.
4. The draft Orders for the scheme were published on 29 November 2016. A total of 43 statutory and 84 non-statutory objections together with 27 representations were received following the publication of Orders which triggered the need for holding a Public Local Inquiry (PLI). A pre-inquiry meeting was held on 5 June 2018 and the PLI oral proceedings, consisting of 3 inquiry sessions and 10 hearing sessions, ran from 30 October until 20 November 2018.
5. The Reporters submitted their report and recommendations to Scottish Ministers on 17 October 2019 for determination. Following careful consideration of the objections received along with the reasoned conclusions and recommendations of the Reporters, the Scottish Ministers have decided that the Orders should be made with modifications as proposed by Transport Scotland.
6. The Scottish Ministers' Decision letter is expected to be issued to objectors on Friday 19 February 2021.
7. The Scottish Ministers' Decision is a significant step forward for the scheme. Preparations are now underway to publish the made Orders for the scheme and we expect to be in a position to do this by the this summer.
8. Publication of Made Orders will trigger a six week period during which any person aggrieved by the Orders may submit a challenge to the Court of Session

for the suspension or quashing of the Orders. Such a challenge generally relates to procedural issues only.

9. Subject to there being no challenges or representations to the Made Orders, this would complete the statutory process for the scheme and allow acquisition of necessary land to be undertaken. It is envisaged that this acquisition, by way of a General Vesting Declaration (GVD), will take place late this year.
10. At the same time preparatory work is also now underway to bring forward advance works following completion of the statutory process and acquisition of land. These may include advance works such as invasive archaeological investigation, ecological mitigation and utility diversions. Further advice on this along with timescales will be provided following completion of the statutory process.
11. The making of the orders does not come with a direct financial implication. The Cabinet Secretary is invited to note however that should land identified in the Compulsory Purchase Order not be acquired by means of GVD within three years from the making of the Order, the Order would fall.

**Extract from briefing to the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport dated 10 March 2021**

- Delivery of each section of the programme can only commence if approved under the relevant statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be set.
- Our intention is that more detailed programme milestones will be provided once the outcome of the statutory consents process for each section is known.
- On the Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) section, following consideration of the Public Local Inquiry Reporters' Report the Scottish Ministers have decided to make the Orders for the scheme with Decision letters issued on 19 February 2021.
- Preparations are now underway to publish the made Orders for the scheme and we expect to be in a position to do this by this summer.

**Extract from Background Note Parliamentary Question S6O-00229 dated 30 September 2021**

Design work is well underway on three sections that make up the A96 Dualling Programme. The substantial development work undertaken to date on the programme is demonstrating that the constraints on the existing A96 corridor, including the proximity of residential property and the number of accesses, means that to achieve full dualling means that nearly all of the route will need to be "offline".

The Scottish Government is not stepping away from its commitment to the north and north east of Scotland to improve the A96 corridor. The Cooperation Agreement sets out that we will take forward a transport enhancements programme on the

corridor that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues. This will include:

- Dualling from Inverness to Nairn
- Bypassing of Nairn, Keith, Elgin and Inverurie accompanied by measures to remove through traffic from the by-passed town centres

**Extract from briefing sent to the Minister for Transport dated 18 January 2022**

In relation to the A96, the Agreement states that the Scottish Government will take forward a transport enhancements programme on the A96 corridor that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues. This will include:

- dualling from Inverness to Nairn;
- bypassing of Nairn, Keith, Elgin and Inverurie accompanied by measures to remove through traffic from the by-passed town centres;

**Extract from briefing sent to the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport dated 19 January 2022**

Dualling from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn is included in the transport enhancement programme on the A96 corridor we will take forward, as set out in the Bute House Agreement. This was confirmed by the Minister for Transport to Mr Ewing in Parliament on 17 November 2021 and we continue to progress the preparation stages of scheme. Delivery of the scheme can only commence if approved under the relevant statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be set in line with available budgets.

**Extract from Background Note Parliamentary Question S6W-05634 dated 27 January 2022**

Funding allocated in the 2022-23 budget for Motorways and Trunk Roads Capital Land and Works will allow us to continue to take forward a number of projects including:

- Commitment to take forward the review of the A96 and also progress the preparation stages of dualling between Inverness and Nairn along with a bypass of Nairn.

**Extract from briefing to the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport dated 1 February 2022**

The Scottish Government is committed to the north and east of Scotland, including improving the A96 corridor.

Dualling from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn is included in the transport enhancement programme on the A96 corridor we will take forward, as set out in the Bute House Agreement, and we continue to progress the preparation stages of the scheme. Delivery of the scheme can only commence if approved under

the relevant statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be set in line with available budgets.

**Extract from briefing to the Minister for Transport dated 23 February 2022**

| <b>Section</b>                              | <b>Status</b>   |
|---|---|
| Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ministerial decision to proceed with the Scheme received 16 February 2021.</li><li>• Progressing with preparation of documentation to allow publication of Made Orders.</li></ul> |

In August 2021 the Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party Parliamentary Group entered into a Cooperation Agreement and shared policy programme (the Bute House Agreement).

In relation to the A96, the Bute House Agreement states that "...the Scottish Government will take forward a transport enhancements programme on the A96 corridor that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues. This will include:

- dualling from Inverness to Nairn;
- bypassing of Nairn, Keith, Elgin and Inverurie accompanied by measures to remove through traffic from the by-passed town centres;

**Extract from briefing to the Minister for Transport dated 1 March 2022**

Dualling from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn is included in the transport enhancement programme on the A96 corridor we will take forward, as set out in the Agreement, and we continue to progress the preparation stages of the scheme. Delivery of the scheme can only commence if approved under the relevant statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be set in line with available budgets.

**Extract from briefing sent to the Minister for Transport dated 7 March 2022**

Dualling from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn is included in the transport enhancement programme on the A96 corridor we will take forward, as set out in the Bute House Agreement, and we continue to progress the preparation stages of the scheme.

**Extract from briefing to the Minister for Transport dated 31 March 2022**

**Purpose of meeting:**

Mr Ewing and Mr Hendry have requested this meeting to discuss progress made on the delivery of the pledges made by SNP at General Elections to complete the

dualling of the A9 from Inverness to Perth, and to dual the section of the A96 from Inverness to Auldearn, which includes the Nairn bypass.

Dualling from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn is included in the transport enhancement programme on the A96 corridor we will take forward, as set out in the Bute House Agreement, and we continue to progress the preparation stages of the scheme to enable completion of the statutory process.

On the Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) section, following consideration of the Public Local Inquiry Reporters' Report the Scottish Ministers announced in February 2021 the go-ahead for completing the statutory procedures.

Delivery of each section of the programme can only commence if approved under the relevant statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be set in line with available budgets.

| Section                                     | Status  |
|---|---|
| Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ministerial decision to proceed with the Scheme received 16 February 2021.</li><li>• Progressing with preparation of documentation to allow publication of Made Orders and completion of statutory process.</li></ul> |

In August 2021 the Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party Parliamentary Group entered into a Cooperation Agreement and shared policy programme (the Bute House Agreement).

In relation to the A96, the Bute House Agreement states that "...the Scottish Government will take forward a transport enhancements programme on the A96 corridor that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues. This will include:

- dualling from Inverness to Nairn;
- bypassing of Nairn, Keith, Elgin and Inverurie accompanied by measures to remove through traffic from the by-passed town centres;

On the Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) section, following consideration of the Public Local Inquiry Reporters' Report the Scottish Ministers decided to make the Orders for the scheme with Decision letters issued on 19 February 2021. Dualling from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn is included in the transport enhancement programme on the A96 corridor to be taken forward, as set out in the Bute House Agreement, and preparation stages of the scheme are being progressed to enable the completion of the statutory process.

Expectation has been raised that the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme will proceed as consented, albeit the question has not been asked directly to date. Specifically during a parliamentary debate on 17 November 2021, Mr Ewing asked the then Minister for Transport to confirm that "...the dualling

*of the stretch of the A96 from Inverness to Auldearn, including in particular the Nairn bypass, will go ahead and will not be subjected to the environmental test...” to which the Minister responded “...in relation to the A96 stretch from Inverness to Auldearn, which includes the Nairn bypass, the project is already excluded from the environmental assessment process, because it has already gone through a formal process. I hope that that provides the clarity that is sought...”*

With respect to Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme specifically, exact timescales for the next stages are difficult to estimate at this stage because the necessary procedural steps need to be completed to finalise the acquisition of land and take the powers required to build the scheme. These steps come with them a right of legal challenge.

Subject to finalisation of the statutory processes for the scheme it is hoped that more certainty over timescales will be able to be provided. At that stage, the timetable for progress will be set in line with the chosen procurement strategy and available budgets.

**Extract from Background Note Parliamentary Question S6O-01051 dated 04 May 2022**

The Scottish Government is not stepping away from its commitment to the north and north east of Scotland to improve the A96 corridor. The Bute House Agreement sets out that we will take forward a transport enhancements programme on the corridor that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues.

This will include:

- Dualling from Inverness to Nairn
- Bypassing of Nairn, Keith, Elgin and Inverurie accompanied by measures to remove through traffic from the by-passed town centres

The review is underway and will consider the entire A96 corridor to look at travel patterns, choice of travel modes and changes to land use since the last data gathering exercise. The review will also consider carefully the safety of the current A96. The findings will be used to test our current plans for dualling outwith the Inverness to Nairn and Nairn Bypass scheme, which already has Ministerial consent. We will use the data to examine what other opportunities could be realised in the future in this transport corridor including a particular focus on road safety.

Dualling from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn is included in the transport enhancement programme on the A96 corridor we will take forward, and we continue to progress the preparation stages of the scheme to enable completion of the statutory process.

The A96 Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme is separate from the wider A96 review process which is currently being undertaken.

Delivery of the scheme can only commence if approved under the relevant statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be set in line with available budgets.

### **Extract from briefing to the Minister for Transport dated 6 May 2022**

- Dualling from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn is included in the transport enhancement programme on the A96 corridor we will take forward, and we continue to progress the preparation stages of the scheme to enable completion of the statutory process.
- On the Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) section, following consideration of the Public Local Inquiry Reporters' Report the Scottish Ministers announced in February 2021 the go-ahead for completing the statutory procedures.
- Delivery of each section of the programme can only commence if approved under the relevant statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be set in line with available budgets.

### **Extract from briefing to the Minister for Transport dated 18 May 2022**

- The Scottish Government is committed to the north and north-east of Scotland, including improving the A96 corridor. The current plan is to fully dual the A96 route between Inverness and Aberdeen, however as part of the Green Party Co-operation Agreement Ministers have agreed to conduct a transparent, evidence-based review of the programme which will report by the end of 2022.

An opportunity for you to highlight the Scottish Government's commitment to improving the A96 corridor, including dualling the A96 between Inverness and Nairn (including Nairn Bypass), supporting its vision of reducing inequalities, climate action, helping to deliver inclusive economic growth and improving our health and wellbeing.

The A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme is separate from the wider A96 review process which is currently being undertaken. We continue to progress the preparation stages of the scheme to enable the completion of the statutory process.

The A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme is separate from the wider A96 review process which is currently being undertaken.

We continue to progress the preparation stages of the scheme to enable the completion of the statutory process. Subject to no legal challenge being received, the Scottish Ministers will then have the relevant powers to acquire the land necessary to construct the scheme.

Delivery of the scheme can only commence if approved under the relevant statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be set in line with available budgets. It is not possible to set a firm programme for delivery of the programme



until statutory consents are completed because we are not in full control of that process or timescale. The statutory right for individuals to have their say on our proposals cannot be set aside.

The ability to make Orders and acquire the land necessary to deliver the scheme is subject to the outcome of the current Capital Spending Review refresh and allocation of required funding for future years. As budgets across government are extremely constrained difficult choices may have to be made by Ministers in terms of progressing with (or prioritising) projects currently in development, including the Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme. Construction of the scheme itself shall require allocation of funding from future Spending Reviews.

The District Valuer will be appointed to negotiate compensation on behalf of Scottish Ministers in accordance with the compensation code once title has been taken to the land required for the scheme. Compensation will be based on current market value at the time of acquisition.

Exact timescales going forward are difficult to estimate at present, because the necessary procedural steps need to be completed to finalise the acquisition of land and take the powers required to build the scheme.

Expectation has been raised that the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme will proceed as consented. During a parliamentary debate on 17 November 2021, Mr Ewing asked the then Minister for Transport (Graeme Dey MSP) to confirm that;

*“..the dualling of the stretch of the A96 from Inverness to Auldearn, including in particular the Nairn bypass, will go ahead and will not be subjected to the environmental test...”*

The Minister responded;

*“..in relation to the A96 stretch from Inverness to Auldearn, which includes the Nairn bypass, the project is already excluded from the environmental assessment process, because it has already gone through a formal process. I hope that that provides the clarity that is sought”.*

Mr Ewing most recently raised the matter in parliament during General Questions on 05 May 2022 asking the Minister in reference to Nairn to:

*“...agree that its attractiveness will be further enhanced once we have the promised bypass and the dualled connection with Inverness, and that the Scottish Government’s unwavering commitment is to make that happen?”*

The Minister responded;

*“...that the A96 from Inverness to Nairn, including the Nairn bypass scheme, which runs from Inverness to Hardmuir, is separate from the wider A96 review process that is currently being undertaken. Indeed, we met recently to discuss the process.*

*We continue to progress the preparation stages of the scheme to enable completion of the statutory processes and, subject to no legal challenge being received, ministers will then have the relevant powers to acquire the land that is necessary to construct”*

Following the Ministers meeting with Drew Hendry MP and Fergus Ewing MSP on 31 March 2022, Transport Scotland officials met with Fergus Ewing MSP on 11 May 2022 in advance of the visit to Nairn with the Ministers approval. At the meeting an overview of the Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme progress and next steps were discussed. Emphasis was placed on future progress being dependent on successful completion of the statutory process and funding being allocated from the on-going capital spending review refresh. Mr Ewing expressed his gratitude in taking the time to explain the procedures that a scheme of this scale must follow, and encouraged TS to continue to keep the stakeholders up to date on progress.

### **Land acquisition**

Acquisition of land required for the scheme can only take place on successful completion of the statutory process and it is only once title is taken that compensation will become payable.

The District Valuer will be appointed to impartially negotiate compensation on behalf of Scottish Ministers in accordance with the compensation code. The assessment of compensation will include heritable value of the land, injurious affection, severance and disturbance and will be based on current market value at the time of acquisition.

As part of the compensation assessment, Scottish Ministers will meet the fees of a professionally qualified person appointed to negotiate the amount of compensation arising from the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) providing they are reasonable, necessary and commensurate with the work undertaken. Reasonable and necessary legal fees arising as a direct consequence of dispossession by any such CPO will also be considered for payment. The surveyor/ agent's fee rate payable by the Scottish Ministers and scope of work should be agreed with the District Valuer in the first instance.

| <b>Section</b>                              | <b>Status</b>   |
|---|---|
| Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Following a Public Local Inquiry into objections made to the scheme and consideration of the Reporters' Report, Ministerial decision to proceed with the Scheme received 16 February 2021.</li><li>• Progressing with preparation of documentation to allow publication of Made Orders and completion of statutory process.</li></ul> |

In August 2021 the Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party Parliamentary Group entered into a Cooperation Agreement and shared policy programme (the Bute House Agreement).

In relation to the A96, the Bute House Agreement states that "...the Scottish Government will take forward a transport enhancements programme on the A96 corridor that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues. This will include:

- dualling from Inverness to Nairn;
- bypassing of Nairn, Keith, Elgin and Inverurie accompanied by measures to remove through traffic from the by-passed town centres;

On the Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) section, following consideration of the Public Local Inquiry Reporters' Report the Scottish Ministers decided to make the Orders for the scheme with Decision letters issued on 19 February 2021. Dualling from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn is included in the transport enhancement programme on the A96 corridor to be taken forward, as set out in the Bute House Agreement, and preparation stages of the scheme are being progressed to enable the completion of the statutory process.

### **Future Progress (including funding and procurement)**

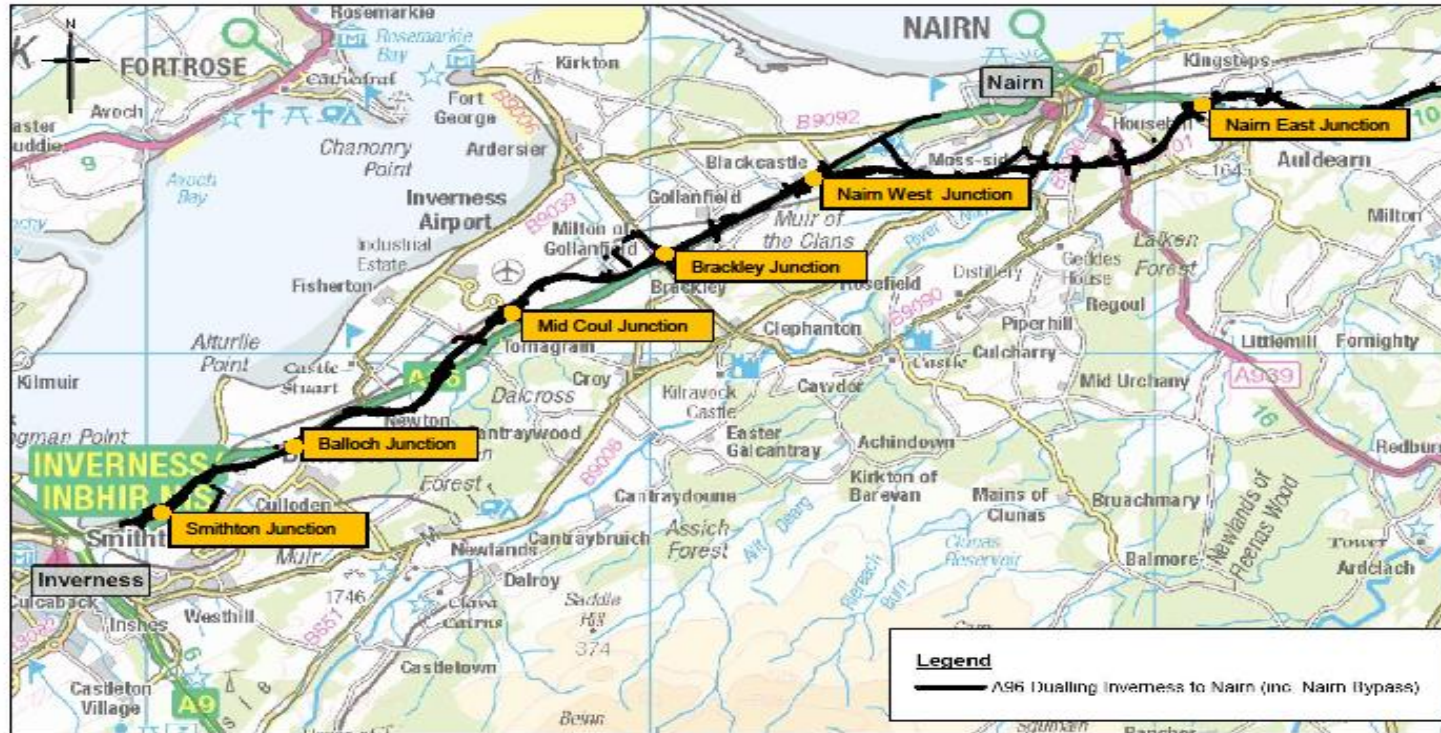
Future progress including consideration of procurement options to deliver the A96 Dualling Programme will be subject to the outcome of the A96 Corridor Review and dependent on subsequent completion of relevant statutory procedures.

With respect to Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme specifically, exact timescales for the next stages are difficult to estimate at this stage because the necessary procedural steps need to be completed to finalise the acquisition of land and take the powers required to build the scheme. These steps come with them a right of legal challenge.

Subject to finalisation of the statutory processes for the scheme it is hoped that more certainty over timescales will be able to be provided. At that stage, the timetable for progress will be set in line with the chosen procurement strategy and available budgets.

Progress on our major road projects will be subject to the outcome of the current spending reviews (both capital and resource). As budgets are extremely constrained difficult choices may have to be made by Ministers in terms of progressing with (or prioritising) projects currently in development.

## A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) Route Overview



**Extract from Background Note from Parliamentary Question S6W-08570 dated 06 June 2022**

The Bute House Agreement sets out that we will take forward a transport enhancements programme on the corridor that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues. This will include:

- Dualling from Inverness to Nairn
- Bypassing of Nairn, Keith, Elgin and Inverurie accompanied by measures to remove through traffic from the by-passed town centres

The review is underway and will consider the entire A96 corridor to look at travel patterns, choice of travel modes and changes to land use since the last data gathering exercise. The review will also carefully consider the safety of the existing A96. The findings will be used to test our current plans for dualling outwith the Inverness to Nairn and Nairn Bypass scheme, which already has Ministerial consent. We will use the data to examine what other opportunities could be realised in the future in this transport corridor including a particular focus on road safety.

**A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass)**

Dualling from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn is included in the transport enhancement programme on the A96 corridor we will take forward, and we continue to progress the preparation stages of the scheme to enable completion of the statutory process. Subject to no legal challenge being received, the Scottish Ministers will then have the relevant powers to acquire the land necessary to construct the scheme.

The A96 Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme, which runs from Inverness to Hardmuir, is separate from the wider A96 review process which is currently being undertaken.

Delivery of the scheme can only commence if approved under the relevant statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be set in line with the chosen procurement strategy and available budgets.

**Extract from briefing to the Minister for Transport dated 07 June 2022**

***A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn bypass) scheme Lines***

The A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme is separate from the wider A96 review process which is currently being undertaken.

We continue to progress the preparation stages of the scheme to enable the completion of the statutory process. It is expected that Orders for the scheme will be made later this summer. Subject to no legal challenge being received, the Scottish Ministers will then have the relevant powers to acquire the land necessary to construct the scheme.

Delivery of the scheme can only commence if approved under the relevant statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be set in line with available budgets. It is not possible to set a firm programme for delivery of the programme until statutory consents are completed because we are not in full control of that process or timescale. The statutory right for individuals to have their say on our proposals cannot be set aside.

As budgets across government are extremely constrained difficult choices may have to be made by Ministers in terms of progressing with (or prioritising) projects currently in development, including the Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme. Construction of the scheme itself shall require allocation of funding from future Spending Reviews.

Exact timescales going forward are difficult to estimate at present, because the necessary procedural steps need to be completed to finalise the acquisition of land and take the powers required to build the scheme.

| Section                                     | Status   |
|---|--|
| Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministerial decision to proceed with the Scheme received 16 February 2021.</li> <li>• Progressing with preparation of documentation to allow publication of Made Orders and completion of statutory process.</li> </ul> |

In August 2021 the Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party Parliamentary Group entered into a Cooperation Agreement and shared policy programme (the Bute House Agreement).

In relation to the A96, the Bute House Agreement states that "...the Scottish Government will take forward a transport enhancements programme on the A96 corridor that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues. This will include:

- dualling from Inverness to Nairn;
- bypassing of Nairn, Keith, Elgin and Inverurie accompanied by measures to remove through traffic from the by-passed town centres;

### ***A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass)***

On the Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) section, following consideration of the Public Local Inquiry Reporters' Report the Scottish Ministers decided to make the Orders for the scheme with Decision letters issued on 19 February 2021. Dualling from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn is included in the transport enhancement programme on the A96 corridor to be taken forward, as set out in the Bute House Agreement, and preparation stages of the scheme are being progressed to enable the completion of the statutory process.

**Extract from Background Note from Parliamentary Question S6O-01196 dated 08 June 2022**

The Bute House Agreement sets out that we will take forward a transport enhancements programme on the corridor that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues. This will include:

- Dualling from Inverness to Nairn
- Bypassing of Nairn, Keith, Elgin and Inverurie accompanied by measures to remove through traffic from the by-passed town centres

The review is underway and will consider the entire A96 corridor to look at travel patterns, choice of travel modes and changes to land use since the last data gathering exercise. The review will also consider carefully the safety of the current A96. The findings will be used to test our current plans for dualling outwith the Inverness to Nairn and Nairn Bypass scheme, which already has Ministerial consent. We will use the data to examine what other opportunities could be realised in the future in this transport corridor including a particular focus on road safety.

**A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass)**

Dualling from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn is included in the transport enhancement programme on the A96 corridor we will take forward, and we continue to progress the preparation stages of the scheme to enable completion of the statutory process. Subject to no legal challenge being received, the Scottish Ministers will then have the relevant powers to acquire the land necessary to construct the scheme.

The A96 Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme, which runs from Inverness to Hardmuir, is separate from the wider A96 review process which is currently being undertaken.

Delivery of the scheme can only commence if approved under the relevant statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be set in line with the chosen procurement strategy and available budgets.

**Extract from briefing sent to the Minister for Transport dated 8 June 2022**

The A96 Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme, which runs from Inverness to Hardmuir, is separate from the wider A96 review process which is currently being undertaken. We are continuing to progress the preparation stages of this scheme, which runs from Inverness to Hardmuir, to enable the completion of the statutory process. Delivery of the scheme can only commence if approved under the relevant statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be set in line with available budgets.

**Extract from Background Note from Parliamentary Question S6W-08854 dated 23 June 2022**

The Bute House Agreement sets out that we will take forward a transport enhancements programme on the corridor that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues. This will include:

- Dualling from Inverness to Nairn
- Bypassing of Nairn, Keith, Elgin and Inverurie accompanied by measures to remove through traffic from the by-passed town centres

The review is underway and will consider the entire A96 corridor to look at travel patterns, choice of travel modes and changes to land use since the last data gathering exercise. The review will also consider carefully the safety of the current A96. The findings will be used to test our current plans for dualling outwith the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme, which already has Ministerial consent. We will use the data to examine what other opportunities could be realised in the future in this transport corridor including a particular focus on road safety.

**Extract from Background Note from Parliamentary Question S6O-01375 dated 22 September 2022**

**We will continue to take forward the preparation stages for dualling the A96 from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn**

- Dualling from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn is included in the transport enhancement programme, as set out in the Bute House Agreement, and we continue to progress the preparation stages of the scheme with a view to completing the statutory process.
- The A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme, which runs from Inverness to Hardmuir, is separate from the wider A96 review process which is currently being undertaken.
- Delivery of the scheme can only commence if approved under the relevant statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be set in line with available budgets.